

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Miracle Mile Historic District

Other names/site number: United States Route 80; United States Route 89;

Arizona Route 94; Miracle Mile; Oracle Road; Drachman Street; Stone Avenue

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Alignment of Miracle Mile, Oracle Road, Drachman Street, Stone Avenue

City or town: Tucson State: Arizona County: Pima

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| _____ Signature of certifying official/Title: | _____ Date |
| _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

| | |
|---|---|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| _____ Signature of commenting official: | _____ Date |
| _____ Title : | _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVAL

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Pueblo

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Burnt Adobe, Brick, Wood Siding, Stucco, Concrete Block

Roof: Prepared Roll, Terra Cotta, Ceramic Tile, Asphalt Shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located north of downtown Tucson, the Miracle Mile Historic District is a significant commercial corridor connected to the development and alignment of Tucson's northern segment of U.S. Route 80, U.S. Route 89, and Arizona Route 84. Throughout the mid-twentieth century, this commercial strip, known as "Miracle Mile," functioned as the northern vehicular gateway of Tucson for travelers traversing the nation. The Miracle Mile Historic District follows the alignment of the following extant arterials: Stone Avenue, Drachman Street, Oracle Road, and Miracle Mile. Also included in the district and associated with the highway site is a two-block segment of Main Avenue lined with trucking transfer warehouses and roadside commercial buildings, as well as four blocks of Flores Street containing a cluster of small motels. The bulk of the contributing resources, facing or within one block of the historic highway alignment, relate to mid-century auto culture and were constructed during the district's *period of significance*; 1920 through 1963. While the district has been rendered discontinuous by development, the identified segments have sufficient significance and integrity to meet National Register criteria. The Miracle Mile Historic District represents four visually and historically linked groups of buildings connected by the alignment of historical U.S. Route 80/89, which is also a contributor to the district. In total, the Miracle Mile Historic District includes 102 individual properties, many with multiple buildings, structures, and objects. Within the Miracle Mile Historic District are 279 individual resources, including 215 buildings, 1 site, 34 structures, and 29 objects. Of these

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resources, 258 are contributors to the district, including 198 buildings, 31 structures, 28 objects, and 1 site, while 21 are non-contributors, including 17 buildings, 3 structures, and 1 object.

Narrative Description

Location

The Miracle Mile Historic District is located 65 miles north of the Mexican border, in the broad Santa Cruz River Valley of southern Arizona, just north of downtown Tucson.

The commercial Miracle Mile Historic District follows the historic alignment of three major highways: (1) the Pacific to Atlantic U.S. Route 80, (2) the Canada to Mexico U.S. Route 89, and (3) Arizona Route 84, which runs southeast from Casa Grande to Tucson. These three highways combined at today's Miracle Mile and Oracle Road, threading through the City of Tucson and the Tucson basin. The bulk of the Miracle Mile Historic District follows the combination of four linear segments of roadway: 1.0 mile of Miracle Mile, 1.49 miles of Oracle Road, 0.35 miles of Drachman Street, and 0.87 miles of Stone Avenue.

Located within the City of Tucson, the Miracle Mile Historic District lies east of the Santa Cruz River, Interstate-10, and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks; 0.8 miles west of the University of Arizona Main Gate in Sections 1 and 2, Township 13 South and 14 South, and Range 13 East of Gila and Salt River Base Line and Meridian.

Originally unincorporated farmland north of Tucson, the Miracle Mile Historic District is now in the heart of Tucson's metropolitan area, bisected by major cross streets Speedway Boulevard and Grant Road.

Boundaries

The Miracle Mile Historic District is comprised of historic-age resources dating to the district's period of significance that abut segments of historic U.S. Route 80, U.S. Route 89 and Arizona Route 84, and includes auto-related commercial development constructed within one block of the historic corridor and portions of four major streets: Stone Avenue (from the Southern Pacific Underpass to Drachman Street), Drachman Street (from Stone Avenue to Oracle Road), Oracle Road (from Drachman Street to Miracle Mile), and Miracle Mile (from Oracle Road to Fairview Avenue). Additionally, four blocks of Flores Street east and west of Oracle Road (from 10th Avenue to 14th Avenue) and a segment of Main Avenue (from Drachman Street to Speedway Boulevard) are included in the district boundaries. While portions of the district have been separated by intervening development, the separated portions have sufficient significance and integrity to meet National Register criteria; therefore, the Miracle Mile Historic District is presented as four definable groups connected by the alignment of historical U.S. Route 80/89, which is a contributor to the district. Each of the four groups of historic resources has a shared visual character that is distinguished by a mix of roadside historic resources, including motor courts, neon signs, and service stations. The groups are visually connected to each other along the navigable historic highway corridor and each conveys the shared period of significance.

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The overall Miracle Mile Historic District boundary, as well as the boundaries of each of the four groups, are shown on the Boundary Maps, and described below.

Overall Boundary – The northern edge is one block north of Miracle Mile (excluding the cemetery); the southern edge is at the southern end of the Stone Avenue Underpass; the eastern edge is one block east of Stone Avenue with a slight indentation along the boundaries of West University Historic District to prevent overlapping districts; and the western edge is between Fairview Avenue and Flowing Wells Road.

- *Group 1 Boundary* – The northern edge is one block north of Miracle Mile (excluding the cemetery); the southern edge runs between Miracle Mile and Laguna Street, with the exception of the southeastern most edge, which extends a bit beyond Laguna Street; the eastern most edge extends beyond Oracle Road to Balboa Avenue; and the western edge is between Fairview Avenue and Flowing Wells Road.
- *Group 2 Boundary* – The northern edge is approximately half way between Glenn Street and Kelso Street; the southern edge is approximately half way between Alturas Street and Grant Road; the eastern edge is generally adjacent to Oracle Road with several protrusions between Oracle Road and Balboa Avenue; and the western edge is one block east of Oracle Road.
- *Group 3 Boundary* – The northern edge is along Sahuaro Street; the southern edge is at Speedway Boulevard; the eastern edge runs generally between Oracle Road and 11th Avenue from the northern boundary to Drachman Street where it extends directly east to 7th Avenue, which is one block east of Stone Avenue; and the western edge runs between Oracle Road and 13th Avenue with one protrusion east of 13th Avenue and one just east of 14th Avenue.
- *Group 4 Boundary* – The northern edge is approximately half way between Speedway Boulevard and University Boulevard; the southern edge is at the southern end of the Stone Avenue Underpass; the eastern edge is one block east of Stone Avenue with a slight indentation along the boundaries of West University Historic District to prevent overlapping districts; and the western edge runs between Stone Avenue and 9th Avenue.

Commercial Development Layout

The commercial development in the Miracle Mile Historic District, similar to that found in other highway corridors throughout the country, catered to travelers, the automobile, and cross-country trucking. The Miracle Mile Historic District runs through multiple early twentieth-century, pre-World War II subdivisions, which were generally laid out in a grid-iron pattern. Over time, the highway-facing lots were combined and reconfigured to adapt to changing commercial needs. The entire Miracle Mile Historic District is outwardly expressed. Commercial enterprises were sited to attract highway travelers and to provide easy access from the highways for cars and trucks. The overall evolving development of the Miracle Mile Historic District created its character.

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Streetscape

The original character-defining features of the roadbed have been altered over time and through multiple expansions. However, the original highway alignment remains intact and is a contributing site that provides the backbone to the contributing and non-contributing resources.

Each of the streets has distinct characteristics, but all share an over-arching design focused on the automobile and its driver. The Miracle Mile Historic District follows wide multi-lane black-top streets edged by concrete curbs. Curb cuts provide automotive access into each commercial property. In 1937 during the period of significance, the highway was improved with sweeping curves and traffic circles at the intersection of Miracle Mile and Oracle Road and the intersection of Oracle Road and Drachman Street. The only surviving segment of the original street curvature is at the intersection of Miracle Mile and Oracle Road; this curvature is a defining feature of the streetscape. The southern terminus of the Miracle Mile Historic District is distinguished by the Stone Avenue Underpass (individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988). This Spanish Revival style underpass, which was specifically designed for traffic to bypass the Southern Pacific Railroad Line, remains intact and an important feature of the streetscape.

Throughout the Miracle Mile Historic District, the majority of the original landscape and trees were removed during road-widening projects subsequent to the period of significance. Original recessed curb-side parallel parking segments and vegetated edges have vanished; the medians along Oracle Road have been narrowed.

Lighting is an important feature of the Miracle Mile Historic District streetscape. Original overhead cobra streetlights, originally painted two-tone black and silver, are now one color and remain extant along portions of the road. Neon signs from the period of significance continue to line the street, adding a whimsical definition and decoration. These signs have been categorized as contributing structures to individual properties. The relationship of the contributing buildings, neon pole mounted signs, original streetlights, and surviving vegetated medians reinforce a strong sense of identity and place.

Miracle Mile: Miracle Mile is divided by a 1950s - 1960s row of large palm trees that were planted during the period of significance; the trees punctuate the Miracle Mile medians. Sidewalks along the roadbed remain intact and are important character-defining features of the roadway, as are the original streetlights.

Oracle Road: Very little of the original highway infrastructure remains intact, although some historic streetlights survive. At the intersection of Miracle Mile and N. Oracle Road, the 1937 curve and majority of the large 1937 median remains relatively intact.

Drachman Street: Drachman Street retains the historic streetlights. Other characteristics of this roadway are its narrower width, and its parallel parking, which was allowed originally, disallowed for a period, and then reintroduced in the early 2000s.

Stone Avenue: Historic streetlights and sidewalks are character-defining elements of the Stone Avenue streetscape.

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Main Avenue: The design of Main Avenue is the same as during the period of significance.

Land Use

The Miracle Mile Historic District is composed primarily of commercial properties that were constructed in relationship to the highway and whose primary function was to provide services to automotive travelers. Lots were generally platted as part of the original Tucson town site, as well as of the following subdivisions:

| Plat Map | Date | Book & Page |
|------------------------|------|-----------------|
| Coronado Heights | 1920 | Book 3 Page 115 |
| Bronx Park Addition | 1920 | Book 3 Page 177 |
| Highland Park Addition | 1923 | Book 4 Page 48 |
| Mesa Verde | 1930 | Book 5 Page 73 |
| El Sahuaro Addition | 1937 | Book 6 Page 74 |
| Miracle Mile Addition | 1937 | Book 6 Page 76 |

Most buildings are located towards the front of the lots, facing the historic highway. The most prevalent property type, the motor court, later universally designated with the auto-age contraction “motel,” is generally constructed in an “L” or “U” shape, often with a swimming pool and vegetated area. Service stations were generally located on corner lots, while other buildings were constructed in relation to traffic patterns. Restaurants and entertainment venues were principally located mid-block. The roads have been widened over time, which has reduced setbacks and vegetated buffers, but overall the land use remains much as it did during the period of significance.

Commercial Architecture

The auto-specific architecture defines the character of the Miracle Mile Historic District. The commercial architecture throughout was designed to attract locals and travelers passing through Tucson, to accommodate their cars, and to provide automotive services. The proliferation of motor courts/motels and service stations is typical of urban highway corridor evolution throughout Arizona and the country. The architecture of the Miracle Mile Historic District is emblematic of evolving southwestern tastes and styles in the pre- and post-World War II eras. Stylistically, the buildings were intended to meet idealized expectations and notions of the romantic “Old West.” Eclectic Revival, Art Deco, and Mid-Century Modernist trends are also prevalent along the historic strip. Stucco, exposed red brick, and red ceramic roof tiles are representative features that are prevalent within the Miracle Mile Historic District. Single and double story buildings are the norm. The Tucson House, constructed in 1963, is the sole exception, reaching over 10 stories to become the district’s most prominent feature from a distance.

Motor court/motel names such as “La Siesta,” “Ghost Ranch,” and “Frontier” invited travelers passing through Arizona to take a break from driving. Swimming pools, lush grass, and neon signs all created an alluring mystique. This contributing commercial architecture unifies the character and shapes the sense of place. The surviving motor courts/motels, service stations,

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commercial buildings, basic material palette, and consistent site utilization are distinctive features along the entire corridor and fashion a unique Miracle Mile Historic District identity. In addition to traveler amenities, the Miracle Mile Historic District includes warehouses for highway trucking. These brick buildings focus on function over style while retaining the ubiquitous material palette.

Integrity in Miracle Mile Historic District

Of the 279 individual resources in the Miracle Mile Historic District, 258 qualify as contributing based on the designated period of significance, as well as on the integrity of the buildings and their ability to convey the Miracle Mile Historic District's defined themes of significance.

Association/Age

The Miracle Mile Historic District contributing properties are associated with Community Development and Planning in Tucson. The period of significance for this nomination (1920 – 1963) is determined by the extent of historic development (build-out) of the highway corridor, consistent with the identified themes of significance. A secondary area of significance is tourism. Located within the Miracle Mile corridor are amenities and buildings created for auto tourists visiting Tucson while traversing the state.

Location

The Miracle Mile Historic District developed along the alignment of historic highways U.S. Route 80, U.S. Route 89, and Arizona Route 84, and although these highways have been decommissioned, their site alignment still connects the historic resources. The streetscape and location is still intact.

Setting

Although the Miracle Mile Historic District has been enveloped by metropolitan growth, its setting has remained unchanged. The Miracle Mile Historic District's street focus has remained intact despite the fact the highway is fragmented and no longer part of a contiguous larger system. The Miracle Mile Historic District has remained distinct from the surrounding neighborhoods with the consistency of its auto-specific architecture connection to the roadway.

Feeling

The Miracle Mile Historic District has maintained a unique sense of place. The roadway site and its relationship to the contributing resources are interlinked. The linear site, limited landscaping, and commercial architecture blend to create a distinctively Tucsonan mid-twentieth-century highway ambience. The surviving original and extant median plantings have all matured. The original organically-developed feeling of the Miracle Mile Historic District persists. Many of the properties in the Miracle Mile Historic District continue their original use.

Design

Because of the 44-year period of development, 1920 – 1963, the Miracle Mile Historic District's organic development in response to automotive needs has created a distinct style. The design of individual resources was thoughtfully developed; these resources combine to create an exuberant streetscape punctuated by large neon signs. Design integrity has been partially compromised due to inappropriate modifications and alterations to the street façades of some individual resources.

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Materials

The architectural eclecticism of the Miracle Mile Historic District is a result of 44 years of design, yet there is a generally limited material palette of exposed red brick, stucco, and block, with rare inclusions of board and batten. The limited materials in a limited architectural expression help to create the Miracle Mile Historic District's overall cohesive character.

Definition of Contributing and Non-contributing Resources

Of the 102 properties within the Miracle Mile Historic District, 88 are contributing properties and 14 are non-contributing properties. The 88 contributing properties include 198 buildings, 1 site, 31 structures, and 28 objects that have maintained their integrity and are, therefore, considered to be contributors. The 14 non-contributing properties include 17 buildings, 3 structures, and 1 object that have lost integrity and are, therefore, considered to be non-contributors. There are 19 empty lots within the Miracle Mile Historic District.

Lack of integrity due to street facing modification: 14 properties in the Miracle Mile Historic District have had extensive alterations to their street façades. As a result, these properties have lost their character-defining features. Common alterations include additions and/or extensive modifications that obscure the original design intent. Prevalent alterations and changes within the Miracle Mile Historic District are modifications to roof-lines, stuccoing of the original brick exterior, changes of windows, and the addition of walls that obscure front façades. These changes obviate the primary architectural objective and negatively impact the cohesiveness of the commercial strip.

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TABLE OF PROPERTIES

| | Address | | | Historic Name | Build. | Obj. | Str.- | Date | Eligible | Reason |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|------|-------|---------|----------|-------------|
| MM001 | 2 | West | Drachman Street | Wash Well No 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1955 | C | |
| MM002 | 22 | West | Drachman Street | Pack'Em Inn Steak House | 1 | | | 1962 | C | |
| MM003 | 106 | West | Drachman Street | Shakey's Pizza Parlor | 1 | | | 1964 | C | |
| MM004 | 138 | West | Drachman Street | roadside residence | 1 | | | 1921 | C | |
| MM005 | 143 | West | Drachman Street | Tucson Inn | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1952 | C | |
| MM006 | 146 | West | Drachman Street | Ben B. Mathews House | 1 | | | c. 1925 | C | |
| MM007 | 210 | West | Drachman Street | Uncle John's Pancake House | 1 | | | 1958 | C | |
| MM008 | 218 | West | Drachman Street | commercial storefront | 1 | | | 1960 | C | |
| MM009 | 225 | West | Drachman Street | El Rancho Motor Hotel | 2 | | 1 | 1948 | C | |
| MM010 | 227 | West | Drachman Street | Frontier Motel | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1958 | C | |
| MM011 | 234 | West | Drachman Street | AAA branch office | 1 | | | 1960 | C | |
| MM012 | 240 | West | Drachman Street | Arizona Rent-A-Car | 1 | | | 1957 | C | |
| MM013 | 246 | West | Drachman Street | Jurisprudence Building | 1 | | | 1962 | C | |
| MM014 | 333 | West | Drachman Street | Executive Inn Motor Hotel | 1 | . | 1 | 1962 | NC | alterations |
| MM015 | 225 | West | Flores Street | Paul's Hideaway Lodge | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1960 | C | |
| MM016 | 232 | West | Flores Street | Casa Linda Motel | 5 | 1 | | 1951 | C | |
| MM017 | 244 | West | Flores Street | Las Flores Motel | 2 | | | 1950 | C | |
| MM018 | 302 | West | Flores Street | Silver Saddle Motel | 3 | | | 1948 | C | |
| MM019 | 303 | West | Flores Street | El Sahuaro Motel | 3 | | | 1947 | C | |
| MM020 | 504 | West | Flores Street | Casa Ray | 7 | 1 | | 1948 | C | |
| MM021 | 1117 | North | Main Avenue | Dunn Edwards Paint Corporation | 1 | | | 1949 | C | |
| MM022 | 1148 | North | Main Avenue | Duke's Drive Inn & Beau Brummel Club | 1 | | | 1947 | C | |
| MM023 | 1149 | North | Main Avenue | Borden Dairy Company | 2 | | | c. 1950 | C | |
| MM024 | 1201 | North | Main Avenue | Western Truck Lines Ltd.(1955) | 2 | | | 1946 | C | |
| MM025 | 1202 | North | Main Avenue | Industrial Transportation | 2 | | | 1946 | C | |
| MM026 | 1243 | North | Main Avenue | warehouse | 1 | | | c. 1950 | C | |
| MM027 | 1319 | North | Main Avenue | furniture warehouse | 2 | | | c. 1940 | C | |
| MM028 | 435 | West | Miracle Mile | Curve Inn Motel | 1 | | | 1952 | NC | alterations |
| MM029 | 437 | West | Miracle Mile | Canyon State Motor Lodge | 3 | | | 1949 | C | |
| MM030 | 465 | West | Miracle Mile | Sun Land Motel | 3 | 1 | | 1952 | C | |
| MM031 | 505 | West | Miracle Mile | Monterey Motel | 10 | 1 | | 1952 | C | |
| MM032 | 515 | West | Miracle Mile | Riviera Motor Lodge | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1953 | C | |
| MM033 | 631 | West | Miracle Mile | Terrace Motel | 2 | 1 | | 1949 | C | |
| MM034 | 707 | West | Miracle Mile | Wayward Winds Motel | 7 | 1 | 2 | 1958 | C | |
| MM035 | 741 | West | Miracle Mile | Manny's Motor Lodge | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1950 | C | |
| MM036 | 749 | West | Miracle Mile | Manny's Hoof and Horn Supper Club | 1 | | | 1961 | C | |
| MM037 | 801 | West | Miracle Mile | Ghost Ranch Lodge | 19 | 1 | 1 | 1941 | C | |
| MM038 | 901 | West | Miracle Mile | service station | 1 | | | 1950 | NC | alterations |
| MM039 | 922 | West | Miracle Mile | Golden Pin Lanes | 2 | | | 1950 | C | |
| MM040 | 937 | West | Miracle Mile | service station | 1 | | | 1940 | C | |
| MM041 | 1065 | West | Miracle Mile | commercial store | 1 | | | 1944 | NC | alterations |
| MM042 | 1130 | West | Miracle Mile | Linda Vista Motel | 4 | | | 1944 | C | |
| MM043 | 1135 | West | Miracle Mile | Amazon Motel | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1964 | C | |
| MM044 | 1333 | North | Oracle Road | Farmers Market | 1 | | | c. 1935 | C | |
| MM045 | 1430 | North | Oracle Road | Quebedeaux Pontiac Auto Dealership | 1 | | | 1954 | C | |
| MM046 | 1500 | North | Oracle Road | Hertz Rent A Car | 2 | | | 1963 | C | |
| MM047 | 1501 | North | Oracle Road | Tucson House | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1963 | C | |
| MM048 | 1601 | North | Oracle Road | Tucson Highway House Motor Hotel | 1 | 1 | | 1961 | C | |
| MM049 | 1602 | North | Oracle Road | La Siesta Motel | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1941 | C | |
| MM050 | 1650 | North | Oracle Road | De Luxe Motel | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1948 | C | |
| MM051 | 1704 | North | Oracle Road | Hacienda Motel | 4 | 1 | 1 | c. 1940 | C | |
| MM052 | 1735 | North | Oracle Road | La Fuente Restaurant | 1 | | | 1949 | NC | alterations |
| MM053 | 1800 | North | Oracle Road | Green Lantern Café | 2 | | | 1938 | NC | alterations |
| MM054 | 1900 | North | Oracle Road | Miracle Breeze | 4 | 4 | | 1963 | C | |
| MM055 | 1919 | North | Oracle Road | Highland Tower Motel | 1 | | 2 | 1941 | C | |
| MM056 | 2010 | North | Oracle Road | Gus & Andy's Tavern | 1 | | | 1963 | C | |
| MM057 | 2015 | North | Oracle Road | Café | 1 | | | c. 1950 | C | |

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| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|--------------|---|---|---|---|---------|----|-------------|
| MM058 | 2042 | North | Oracle Road | Service Station | 1 | | | 1959 | C | |
| MM059 | 2104 | North | Oracle Road | Blakely's Miracle Mile Station 1955 | 1 | | 1 | 1953 | NC | alterations |
| MM060 | 2115 | North | Oracle Road | El Sol Motel | 2 | 1 | | 1942 | NC | alterations |
| MM061 | 2130 | North | Oracle Road | Saddle & Sirloin Restaurant | 1 | | | 1951 | NC | alterations |
| MM062 | 2201 | North | Oracle Road | Pago Pago Restaurant & Lounge | 1 | | | c. 1945 | NC | alterations |
| MM063 | 2280 | North | Oracle Road | unknown | 1 | | | 1935 | C | |
| MM064 | 2281 | North | Oracle Road | Peppylons | 1 | | | 1952 | C | |
| MM065 | 2425 | North | Oracle Road | De Anza Motel | 2 | | 1 | 1940 | C | |
| MM066 | 2445 | North | Oracle Road | The Don Motel | 9 | | 1 | 1941 | C | |
| MM067 | 2537 | North | Oracle Road | Coronado Court | 2 | | | c. 1920 | C | |
| MM068 | 2540 | North | Oracle Road | Commercial Buildings | 6 | | | 1937 | C | |
| MM069 | 2549 | North | Oracle Road | Seven Up Bottling Co | 1 | | | 1940 | C | |
| MM070 | 2580 | North | Oracle Road | Gulf Station | 1 | | | c. 1950 | C | |
| MM071 | 2601 | North | Oracle Road | Naomi Court | 4 | | 1 | 1942 | C | |
| MM072 | 2637 | North | Oracle Road | Thunderbird Lodge | 2 | | | 1942 | NC | alterations |
| MM073 | 2649 | North | Oracle Road | Oracle Court | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1940 | C | |
| MM074 | 2720 | North | Oracle Road | Jim Counes' Northwoods | 1 | | | 1962 | NC | alterations |
| MM075 | 2725 | North | Oracle Road | Motel El Corral | 8 | | | 1949 | C | |
| MM076 | 2865 | North | Oracle Road | service station | 1 | | 1 | 1959 | C | |
| MM077 | 2900 | North | Oracle Road | D E Hicks service station | 1 | | 1 | 1957 | C | |
| MM078 | 2914 | North | Oracle Road | Club 21 | 1 | | | c. 1940 | C | |
| MM079 | 503 | North | Stone Avenue | M. L. Stephenson Restaurant | 1 | | 1 | 1928 | C | |
| MM080 | 538 | North | Stone Avenue | Fred Myles | 1 | | | 1920 | C | |
| MM081 | 549 | North | Stone Avenue | Signal Service Station | 1 | | | 1944 | C | |
| MM083 | 616 | North | Stone Avenue | Ed Bonnefoy Ice Station | 1 | | | 1931 | C | |
| MM084 | 624 | North | Stone Avenue | Henry Kaldenbaugh Agency | 2 | | | 1946 | C | |
| MM085 | 625 | North | Stone Avenue | Service Station | 2 | | | 1926 | C | |
| MM086 | 648 | North | Stone Avenue | G. D. F. Frazier Service Station | 2 | | | 1937 | C | |
| MM087 | 700/712 | North | Stone Avenue | Consumer Market and Drug Store | 1 | | | 1941 | C | |
| MM088 | 722 | North | Stone Avenue | No Stone Laundry and Dry Cleaning | 1 | | | 1952 | C | |
| MM089 | 730 | North | Stone Avenue | Safeway Pay and Take | 1 | | | 1933 | C | |
| MM090 | 744 | North | Stone Avenue | Commercial Storefront | 1 | | | 1954 | C | |
| MM093 | 847 | North | Stone Avenue | Beaudry Motor CO. | 1 | | | 1940 | C | |
| MM094 | 900 | North | Stone Avenue | Arizona Bank | 1 | | | 1961 | C | |
| MM095 | 919 | North | Stone Avenue | Tidelands Motor Inn, Sahara Motel | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1960 | C | |
| MM096 | 930 | North | Stone Avenue | Laundromat 1/2 Hour Laundry | 1 | | | 1952 | NC | alterations |
| MM097 | 950 | North | Stone Avenue | Rodeway Inn | 1 | | 1 | 1964 | C | |
| MM098 | 1132 | North | Stone Avenue | Travel Lodge | 1 | | 1 | 1957 | C | |
| MM099 | 1202 | North | Stone Avenue | Lee's Drive In Liquors | 1 | | | 1952 | C | |
| MM100 | 1240 | North | Stone Avenue | Speedway Bowling Lanes | 1 | | | 1941 | C | |
| MM101 | 1248 | North | Stone Avenue | Imperial 500 Motel | 1 | | 1 | 1961 | NC | alterations |
| MM102 | 1300 | North | Stone Avenue | Flamingo Hotel | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1954 | C | |
| MM103 | | | | Stone Avenue Underpass | | | 1 | 1935 | C | |
| MM104 | | | | Miracle Mile - Oracle Road traffic circle | | | 1 | 1937 | C | |
| MM105 | | | | Miracle Mile Alignment Site | | | | 1926 | C | |

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1920 - 1963

Significant Dates

1937 construction of "Miracle Mile Safety Highway"

1963 construction of Tucson House

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Located north of downtown Tucson, the Miracle Mile Historic District is a significant commercial corridor connected to the development and alignment of Tucson's northern segment of U.S. Route 80, U.S. Route 89, and Arizona Route 84. Throughout the mid-twentieth century, this commercial strip, known as "Miracle Mile," functioned as the northern vehicular gateway to Tucson for travelers. The Miracle Mile Historic District follows the alignment of the following extant arterials: Stone Avenue, Drachman Street, Oracle Road, and Miracle Mile. Also included in the district and associated with the highway site is a two-block segment of Main Avenue lined with trucking transfer warehouses and roadside commercial buildings, as well as four blocks of Flores Street containing a cluster of small motels. The bulk of the contributing resources, facing or within one block of the historic highway alignment, relate to mid-century auto culture and were constructed during the district's *period of significance* -- 1920 through 1963. In total, the Miracle Mile Historic District includes 279 individual resources, of which 258 are contributing to the district and 21 are non-contributing to the district.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Community Development and Planning 1920 to 1963

Tucson's Highway Development and Community Impact

Inhabited since at least 2100 BCE, Tucson's prehistoric communities developed in close proximity to the watercourses running through the valley. These agrarian cultures developed irrigation systems, farming practices, and extensive overland trading routes.

The historical period of the region begins with the arrival in 1694 of the Spanish missionary Eusebio Francisco Kino, who blazed new trails and established an extensive chain of missions throughout northwestern Mexico in what would later become Arizona. Father Kino extended El Camino Real to San Xavier del Bac and Tucson.

The village became an important military outpost in 1775 with the establishment of the Presidio San Agustín del Tucson. With the Presidio, Tucson became a major stop on El Camino Real, the alignment of which has survived as Main Avenue.

Franciscan missionaries under constant threat of Native American raids supervised the construction of a defensive wall and chapel at the San Cosmé de Tucson mission visita, close to the protection of the Presidio. The continued military significance of Tucson can be seen in the 1873 creation of Fort Lowell for the U.S. Cavalry and the 1940 Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

The demands of the 1849 California gold-rush "Forty-Niners" motivated the creation of supply chains throughout Arizona. Through the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, southern Arizona was

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acquired by the United States with the explicit purpose of creating an all-season transcontinental railroad (Nequette 2000:4). From 1857 to 1861, the Butterfield Stagecoach stopped in Tucson twice a week en route from San Francisco to St. Louis.

The City of Tucson was incorporated in 1877 with an estimated population of 7,000. The 1880 arrival of the transcontinental railroad in Tucson, along with a later spur route to Mexico, brought dramatic social and architectural changes to the city, transforming the rugged outpost. Eastern architectural tastes and influences transformed the flat-roofed Sonoran buildings to Arizona Territorial style. Queen Ann Revival and a series of other early twentieth-century revival styles shaped Tucson's post-1880 built environment. More than architectural styles, however, arrived via the Southern Pacific Railroad.

After seeing an automobile in a circus, Tucson resident Dr. Hiram W. Fenner ordered one, which arrived by rail in 1899. Tucson's first automobile managed to travel a few blocks from the station before running into a saguaro cactus. In 1905, the undaunted Dr. Fenner was issued Tucson's first driver's license. (Cox 1998:15)

During the early twentieth century, the southern section of the Miracle Mile Historic District was part of the Tucson town site running north from the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to Speedway Boulevard at the city's edge. The City of Tucson and Additions Map, compiled and drawn in 1909 by J. B. Wright, civil engineer, reveals that the southern half of the Miracle Mile strip from Grant Road south to Speedway was owned by Albert Steinfield, C.F. Schumacher, and J. Campini. The undeveloped property was bounded by undeveloped land to the north; the city cemeteries, with the Mountain View Addition to the west; the platted streets and parcels of Feldman Addition and Tucson Heights to the east; and also to the west, Yuma Road, the city's primary ingress-egress, and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks.

In 1909, the cemetery west of Stone Avenue was closed and the area began to be redeveloped into neighborhoods. Some human remains were relocated to the area north of the Miracle Mile Historic District, which had been developed as the Evergreen and Holy Hope Cemeteries. The rest of the remains were left in place and forgotten.

The area east of the Santa Cruz River was flat, undeveloped and agricultural land prior to the rise of automobile culture infrastructure. This area, on the northern edge of what would become the Miracle Mile Historic District, was promoted in 1917 by George Wharton James in his book *Arizona, the Wonderland*:

The Tucson Farms Company owns and operates the largest and most modern dairy in Tucson, known as the Flowing Wells Dairy. The chief object in operating the dairy is to supply to the people of Tucson the best milk obtainable, and incidentally to furnish an outlet for the farmers who have bought lands of the Tucson Farms Company [...] The comparatively small acreage in this portion of Arizona that can ever be supplied with irrigation water, and the great developments in mining in the immediate vicinity of Tucson, providing a local demand for all sorts of products of the soil, present a desirable combination to the farmer, equaled by few localities. (James 1917:317-318)

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The Tucson Farms Company was not a financial success, and in 1922 the newly formed Flowing Wells Irrigation District took control of the wells and water distribution system. This water source was one factor leading to the development of Pascua Yaqui Village west of Miracle Mile Historic District at Grant Road and Oracle Road.

As the area developed and subdivisions were platted, new roadways were aligned. The northern entrance of the city shifted east. Yuma Road, bordering the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, connected with Main Avenue and continued through downtown Tucson. When Yuma Road was abandoned, traffic was shifted to the new Casa Grande Highway, which ran southeast into the city, turned east onto Miracle Mile, then south onto Oracle Road, east onto Drachman Street, and finally south onto Stone Avenue. This realignment, providing developable land along roads with significant and increasing traffic, created tremendous economic opportunity for entrepreneurs. As the automobile proliferated and became seen as a household necessity, the roadway developed to accommodate the new and rapidly growing automotive culture.

Tucson's Automobile Age had begun. For the first time, the automobile allowed travelers, in mass numbers, to enjoy independent adventures. The first vehicles were built for the wealthy, and little infrastructure existed to support long distance travel. This changed in 1908, when Henry Ford introduced assembly line industrial construction, which reduced costs and enabled the Model T to be offered for \$850. Over 19,000 Model Ts were sold by the end of the first year (Witzel 2000:11-15). Traversing the vast Arizona landscape, however, was still an arduous task. Rough, irregular roads, in some cases barely suitable even for equine travel, were poorly equipped and hazardous for the car.

The "*Automobile Blue Book for 1912, Volume 5, Mississippi River to Pacific Coast* provided detailed turn-by-turn directions from Tucson to Phoenix. This excerpt from the page-long complicated route demonstrates the region's need for infrastructural highway investment:

The distance from Tucson to Phoenix is listed as 127.1 miles...Ahead of the careful directions is a statement that 'the following route matter is written from data taken by representatives of the Ohio Motor Co. on their transcontinental trip in the fall of 1910 [...] Tucson, Santa Rita hotel on right. Go one block to trolley and turn left; keep straight ahead. Cross bridge. Cross RR. And bear left with tracks on left. Bear right and pass small adobe house on right. Take left fork. Turn right, bearing left 6.1 miles; again left 6.3 miles. Cross irrigation ditch. Turn right – RR. again on left. Bear right away from RR. Bear right. Turn left. Bear right through Mesquite Road, coming back to RR. Go through wire lane. Turn left at wire fence corner, passing Rillito Station; buildings and tank over to the left. Bear left at the corner of three fences, around stone ground tank and wind mill. (Automobile Blue Book for 1912:35)

During the same period, several private companies conceived of artificial groupings of southern American cities, including Tucson, as a pattern of connected highways and locations extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Cities that paid were included in the private route. In 1916, the Old Spanish Trail was established, evoking the romanticism of colonial Spanish history. Cities along the route benefited from cross-county travel, capitalizing on cultural tourism.

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On the northern edge of Tucson, the Old Spanish Trail merged with other routes in a serpentine path through the city. The prolific development of motor courts/motels and roadside businesses along these corridors served the increasing numbers of cross-country and regional travelers.

After substantial federal investment, the basic route was officially commissioned in 1926 as U.S. Route 80, passing through Douglas, Bisbee, and Benson. U.S. Route 89 from Mexico passed through Nogales, Tumacacori, and Tubac to enter Tucson from the south. These two roadways merged on the southern edge of Tucson, and snaked together through the city, heading north through Florence and Globe towards Phoenix. Arizona Route 84, the Casa Grande Highway (later re-labeled as Miracle Mile), split off at Tucson's northern edge heading north to the cities of Casa Grande, Phoenix, and Gila Bend (*United States Route 80, From Savannah, 1930:10*).

David Devine's essay "Dreaming of Autopia," published by the Tucson Corral of the Westerners in the journal *The Smoke Signal*, provides a concise look at Southern Arizona's highway development:

Highway 80 was called several names before, and even after, it received its numerical designation. It was part of the "roadway of America which stretched from New York to southern California. It was included in 'The Old Spanish Trail' reaching from Florida to San Diego. It was also called the 'Bankhead Highway', 'Dixie Overland Highway' and the 'Lee Highway.'" (Devine 1997:15).

These names, intended to evoke glamour, were created solely to attract tourists to the involved communities and their sponsoring business associations, only incidentally promoting a particular cross country route.

Under Managing Director Mr. Harral Ayres, the Old Spanish Trail Association established the Old Spanish Trail as an all-year highway. As a result, the federal government allocated \$80 million between 1923 and 1929 for bridges and road construction (Old Spanish Trail Guide Book 1929:12). The federal investment in this transcontinental highway would lead to its formal designation as U.S. Route 80 in 1926. The highway, also called the Broadway of America, linked and promoted the southern portion of the country and its rich history. This excerpt from the 1929 Old Spanish Trail Guide Book illustrates this historic allure:

Florida was Spanish until 1819; Spain sold Old Louisiana back to France in 1800, and France ceded it to the United States in 1803. The independence of Texas was won in 1836 and the State was annexed by the United States in 1845. The New Mexico-Arizona-Southern California territory was ceded to the United States by Mexico in 1848, and the Gadsden Purchase of part of southern New Mexico and Arizona was consummated in 1853. Route 80 and 90 today bind together all of these Spanish territories of the United States. (Old Spanish Trail Guide Book 1929:4)

An account published by the Old Spanish Trail Association in 1929, described the Old Spanish Trail as being composed of gravel, sand, clary, or topsoil for more than 50% of the Trail; brick, concrete, or bituminous macadam for about 30%; and graded and drained or unimproved roadway for the remainder.

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Urban development changed due to the proliferation of the automobile. In Tucson, as the commercial corridor extended north along the highway alignment, the architecture responded to the emerging culture of speed and automobile travel. New vehicles induced the merger of architecture and advertising. This transformation in architectural styles was facilitated in part by the lack of zoning ordinances outside of city limits. This regulatory freedom in the contiguous locale just beyond the traditional commercial center inspired new entrepreneurs and became the ideally-suited place to capture the emerging mobile and tourist market. These new businesses were forced to re-conceive ways of attracting customers in newer, faster cars.

The Miracle Mile Historic District articulates this architectural transformation. Within the southern-most section of the Miracle Mile Historic District, traditional commercial development and the new emerging automotive responsive styles remain extant. The surviving 1920 Fred Myles building (MM080) near the southern edge of the Miracle Mile Historic District is an extension of the early twentieth-century downtown storefront architectural typology. The needs of commercial buildings were rapidly changing to accommodate new customer habits and the fast pace of the modern car culture. By the mid-1920s, the traditional approach was abandoned for this new architectural model.

Liebs in *Main Street to Miracle Mile* addresses this new need:

A roadside merchant needed not only to grab the attention of the speeding motorist in a very short period of time, but also to prompt the critical decision to stop and purchase. To catch the passing motorists' attention in this brief "flash time," the merchant had to resort to anything that could make his business visible (signs, lights, shapes, heights, colors) and to devise a message (something intriguing, fun, comforting, unusual, or just promising cheap goods) that would draw them in without fail.

New stylistic tactics developed to capture this high-speed customer base. New businesses began adopting and reviving older styles. During the years between World War I and World War II, the domestic image became immensely popular and was used by roadside merchants in part because houses along the roadside were small buildings that could be adapted for commercial use. Again Liebs:

[...] the concept of home held deep-rooted symbolic value [...] Imbued with this degree of cultural symbolism, the image of home was therefore ideally suited for exploitation by the roadside merchant. Purely utilitarian reasons existed for the choice as well. Houses were small buildings and readily adaptable for roadside selling. (Liebs:44)

The M. L. Stephenson Restaurant (MM079) from 1928 shows this domestic style. Throughout the Miracle Mile Historic District there were other early examples of this style, but they were replaced during the period of significance by new buildings and more modern styles. With new popular trends, particularly regional and historic imagery, the earlier domestic style rapidly became obsolete as crazes evolved in relationship to highway architecture. Liebs explores this transformation:

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Stimulating associations with places other than home made good commercial sense also. Since tourists usually had well-formed notions about what they should find in a particular part of the country – seafood in New England, cowboys and Indians in the West – businesses could benefit from the reservoir of romantic ideas the public held regarding a historic site or geographic region. By anticipating these preconceptions, the creative owner of a roadside business could pull together a potpourri of references – through landscaping, architectural features, or simply an evocative name and picture on the sign in front – that would convey the appropriate image with all its corresponding associations. (Liebs:50)

Architectural stereotypes had been successfully employed in commercial architecture from the late 1890s, enticing tourists to the American Southwest. Fred Harvey utilized regional styles in the track-side architecture of his hotels and restaurants, evoking Spanish Missions and Indian Pueblos. (Liebs:50)

In the Miracle Mile Historic District, pre- and early post- World War II buildings employed this historically emotive stylistic approach. Spanish Revival was the most popular, including El Rancho Motor Hotel (MM009), Frontier Motel (MM010), Sun Land Motel (MM030), Ghost Ranch Lodge (MM037), La Siesta Motel (MM049), Schafer-Norton Service Station (MM092) and two additional gas stations (MM038) and (MM085). The area also included Pueblo Revival buildings: Naomi Court (MM071), Oracle Court (MM073), and the Hacienda Motel (MM051), although the latter Pueblo Revival was adjusted in the early 1950s to give it a more Spanish Revival flavor with the addition of red tile porches. Occasionally the revival style extended to the highway infrastructure, such as the Mission style Stone Avenue Underpass (MM103). The underpass was commissioned in 1935 by the Arizona Highway Department, and constructed by M.M. Sundt under project NRM-9 specifically to carry the highway under the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Revival and domestic styles were not the only source for roadside design. Concurrent with the surge in romantic regionalism was the concept of Moderne, which expressed the technological excitement of the times. As noted by Liebs in *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, this included several new systems of design and decoration, including Art Deco or Zigzag Moderne, the Streamline Moderne, the Modern, and, after World War II, exaggerated forms of the Modern.

Architects and designers, in western Europe as well as the United States, began searching for a visual vocabulary that, instead of being rooted in antiquity, expressed the fast-paced technological excitement of their own times. During the interwar years, several new systems of design and decoration emerged from this search, including Art Deco or Zigzag Moderne; the Streamline Moderne; the Modern and after World War II, exaggerated forms of the Modern. (Liebs:53)

Today there are minimal vestiges of Art Deco within the Miracle Mile Historic District, but a few significant examples of Art Deco/Streamline Moderne survive, including the 1937 G. D. F. Frazier Service Station designed by architect Cecil Moore (MM086) and the Speedway Bowling Lanes Building (MM 100). Other more simple streamlined buildings include the 1940 Seven Up

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Bottling Co building (MM069) and the 1940 Beaudry Motor Company showroom building (MM099).

The Modern architectural style of the post-World War II era is prominent within the Miracle Mile Historic District. The infusion of International style elements into the modern vocabulary, and the exuberance following the war, transformed architectural tastes. This new architectural philosophy was imbedded in a new body of work that became an idiom of flamboyant, physical displays of energy with the embrace of geometric form. Within the Miracle Mile Historic District are a number of these buildings. Architect Art Brown, AAA Tucson Branch Office (MM011) embraced architectural exuberance with a circular building and pleated roof form. The 1952 Tucson Inn (MM005) designed by Anne Rysdale was conceived as a geometric form with long ribbon windows and pre-cast concrete details. The 1947 Duke's Drive Inn & Beau Brummel Club (MM022) was conceived as a circular building with a deep overhang, the plate glass windows connecting the interior to the street. The 1953 Riviera Motor Lodge (MM032) featured a popular tilted glass window system as part of the lobby design. Golden Pin Lanes (MM039) designed in 1950 by architect Howard Peck embraced a curved unadorned stone front wall. The Quebedeaux Pontiac Auto Dealership (MM045) also featured a curved front with a two-story tall massive wall extending from the back of the circular shape, designed to hold a large sign. The 1954 Flamingo Hotel (MM0102) and the 1960 Tideland's Motor Inn, Sahara Motel (MM095) embraced the geometric modernist design. One of the last buildings built during the period of significance was the Tucson House (MM047), which was designed by architect Nicholas Sakeller in 1963. Although the original design of the building was simplified, the multi-story apartment building embraced the International style.

Within the Miracle Mile Historic District, the most prominent building type is the motor court / motel. The 39 extant lodgings are a significant focus of this nomination, and provide an examination of motor court / motel typology. The Miracle Mile Historic District, however, is home to a number of other auto-related property types that were constructed as a direct result of the highway. These include 11 Gas Stations, 10 Restaurants, 6 Trucking Warehouses, 2 Auto Showrooms, 2 Bowling Alleys, and various other buildings related to automotive services and travel, including a supermarket, Arizona Rent-A-Car offices, and the local American Automobile Association office.

The accessibility of popularly-priced automobiles ushered in a period of infrastructure investment and expansive growth, leading, within a few decades, to paved and well-maintained roads that connected ever-expanding cities. Southern Arizona became an easy destination for drivers and their passengers. The city expanded in all directions with subdivisions and houses designed to accommodate the car. The car provided freedom and a new commercial auto related infrastructure developed to accommodate a new class of drivers.

Motor Courts/Motels

Until the early 1920s, travelers in Tucson were limited to traditional multi-storied hotels in the downtown commercial district, built close to the railroad during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Pioneer Hotel and the Santa Rita Hotel, as well as smaller establishments equipped with restaurants and luxury facilities, catered primarily to the train traveler and,

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therefore, provided minimal parking space. Early motorists would often camp overnight on the roadside where they could park their cars in close proximity. Municipalities encouraging regional tourism opened the first “Auto Camps”; Tucson was no exception.

With the new freedom provided by the car, Tucson grew east and west of the railroad and along the vehicular ingress and egress of the city. As mining claims in the region began failing, Tucson became famous for its tuberculosis and respiratory clinics. A group of industrious businessmen created the Tucson Sunshine Climate Club, which launched a national marketing campaign in 1920 to increase tourism. The campaign capitalized on ideas from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national advertising that targeted and mythologized the American southwest. The campaign expanded images popularized by the Santa Fe Railroad, in tandem with Fred Harvey and Mary Coulter, to create a boom in the “Old West” tourist destination market.

The highly successful advertising conjured images of cowboys and Spanish missions while promoting the health benefits of the desert climate, resulting in robust growth in tourism and immigration. The quantifiable economic benefits determined that tourism would quickly become a staple of the Tucson economy. The campaign continued for decades. (Tucson Sunshine Climate Club 1940:1)

The Tucson Sunshine Climate Club promoted Tucson’s auto camping, which Warren Belasco discusses in *Americans on the Road*:

Auto camping began as a vacation alternative for the relatively comfortable middle classes. Although no longer just a rich man’s toy, an automobile was the prerogative for fewer than 500,000 owners in 1910. Even in 1920 with over eight million passenger cars registered, most Americans still relied on rail transportation when leaving home. This era of mass motoring served by an elaborate commercial infrastructure lay just ahead, but auto camping “originally appealed to affluent individuals for whom the very lack of an established infrastructure was its major attraction” At first they parked by the side of the road and set up camp for the night. In remote areas their “roadside hotel” might be an alluring clearing, perhaps with a good view and a nearby stream for bathing, drinking and fishing. (Belasco 1979:7-8)

By the early 1920s, 3,000 to 6,000 municipal auto camps had been established in the nation. (Flink:184) Tucson, like many communities, quickly opened and locally subsidized an auto camp attracting early affluent adventurers. This camp, which was known as the Tucson Auto Park, was located at 644 Saint Mary’s Avenue, not far from the Miracle Mile Historic District. This municipal auto camp, similar to other such camps across the county, was short lived because too many guests were staying for longer-than-acceptable durations. The city-managed auto camps were replaced by competitive private businesses.

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Belasco on auto camps:

The free municipal auto camps were even more short lived then the roadside camp [...] It was free, open, and accessible to all travelers who happened to be passing through. Tourists took their chances with the types of people camping nearby. [...] [Automobile] registration quadrupled from 4.6 million in 1917 to 19.2 million in 1926. Although many of these car buyers were middle class others were more economically marginal people for whom the auto camp was the only place to stay. As a result, the camp population became a bit too proletarian for certain tastes. (Belasco 1979:7-8).

Three of the early private auto camps were established within the Miracle Mile Historic District. By 1927, Stumble Inn Auto Camp was in operation on the corner of Drachman Street and Oracle Road and the Roosevelt Auto Camp was open at 1920 North Oracle Road, one mile north of Speedway Boulevard. In 1928, All States Auto Camp was established at 2650 North Oracle Road at Jacinto Street. (None of these auto camps survive.)

As the automobile industry flourished, the auto camps evolved. The camps added an ever-expanding array of amenities explicitly designed to attract the automobile-equipped tourist. These businesses provided space to park and reasonably priced accommodation. By 1929, nine auto camps were thriving along South 6th Avenue on the southern side of Tucson, and the city's first two formal ' motor courts had opened: Midway Auto Court and Rainbow Court. Other "mom-and-pop" entrepreneurs followed during the first wave of Tucson's automobile-specialized lodging enterprise. The three auto camps within the Miracle Mile Historic District were transformed into formal configurations of cabins by the early 1930s, competing to offer the best amenities. As noted by David Devine in *Dreaming of Autopia*,

Between 1925 and 1940, many of the auto courts of Southern Arizona would transform from shacks to pleasant rooms with every convenience the traveler could want. These "Motor Courts" continually changed and improved in order to stay competitive." (Devine 1997:167).

In a description of the 1930s, Tucson

[is] the only large city in the county, has a population of 45,000 people, a health and dude resort, is a university city, cattle ranch center, center of mining, center of history, reminiscent of Spanish conquerors and of Padre Kino building his chain of missions. (Hogner qt. in Devine 1997:177)

The evolution of the American roadside served as a template for Tucson's own roadside culture. The era which produced most of the area's roadside artifacts was heralded by the post war boom. (Heimann 1997:4)

Tucson was a popular vacation destination in this era with mild winters, natural desert resources, and easy accessibility. Increased tourism stimulated increasing numbers of guest ranches, auto camps, and motor courts/motels, all of which catered to adventurers seeking a glimmer of the

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“Old West.” Proximity to Mexico, rich Spanish Colonial history, and distinctive architecture distinguished Tucson from other cities in Arizona and the greater Southwest (Tucson Sunshine Climate 1930:2). Entrepreneurs happily appropriated iconic saguaro cacti, decrepit relics such as wagon wheels, and a movie-flavored Southwestern vernacular language to promote this western image.

By the mid-1930s, guest ranches, hotels, and a new hostelry -- “the motor court,” or “motor hotel” (the latter eventually shortened to “motel”) -- boomed. Small clusters of tourist cabins evolved into formal small-sized motor courts in U or L-shaped plans. Individual rental units were often separated from neighboring units with covered carports. Housing for the owner or manager was usually integrated into the main building, adjacent to the office. The motor court/motor hotel owners advertised swimming pools, shuffleboard courts, “refrigerated air,” and garden areas to draw customers

In 1931, Vida’s Place at 2412 North Oracle (demolished) was the first formal motor court constructed in the Miracle Mile Historic District, followed by the extant 1936 Spanish revival De Luxe Motor Court at 1650 North Oracle. The De Luxe Motel was unique to Tucson as a member of the first association of motor hotels.

Motel associations were open to all, which made it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain standards, let alone raise them. Consequently, small groups of motel owners began to cooperate in upgrading properties, the idea being to create networks of high quality motels through which business could be referred. Each member of a system was pledged to maintain agreed-upon standards and to display the group’s identifying emblem. One of the earliest of the referral chains was the Deluxe Motor Courts, administered initially from Los Angeles. Promoters drove major highways to identify appropriate motels and sell owners on the benefits of affiliation. Deluxe Motor Courts were located primarily in California, Oregon, and Washington, although in 1936 salesmen added motels along U.S. Route 70 and U.S. Route 80 in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas in anticipation of that year’s Texas Centennial Exposition at Dallas. (Jakle 1996:139)

By the late 1930s, privately owned, independent motels clustered along the highway’s edge, predominately located on the outskirts of Tucson. The motor courts/motels were developed and sometimes built by the owners. Characteristics and design motifs varied according to taste, but the common interest was to evoke the American Southwest. This was expressed architecturally through popular revival styles and romanticized by colorful names. Owners began adding additional amenities to compete with other overnight accommodations. Entrepreneurs established cafés, restaurants, and service stations all designed to attract motorists off the black top. Over time these small courts evolved into larger properties with even more amenities. During the post-World War II era, two-story motels with a hundred+ rooms were constructed. Surviving examples of these larger motels include the Tucson Inn (MM005) and the Flamingo Hotel (MM102). The development of the motel typology over time transformed the character of the district.

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Gas Stations

Within the Miracle Mile Historic District there are 11 gas station buildings that catered to motorists during the period of significance. The service station was an important building type, which allowed the car to traverse the region. In *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, Liebs says:

Beginning in 1905, pumps began to appear on the market that allowed gas to be transferred to an awaiting car via rubber hose – quickly and safely. This improvement in doling out motor fuel helped to make the automobile a more practical mode of transportation, and the next few years heralded an explosion of interest in the new machines. Larger factories were built, car sales shot up 4,500 percent by 1910 and the demand for gas skyrocketed. Eager to cash in on this new market, the nation's oil companies, including still familiar firms such as the Texas Company and Shell and the numerous Standard Oil firms such as Socony (created when Rockefeller's giant monopoly was dissolved in 1911), boosted production. They also scoured the country for places to sell oil and fuel to the growing ranks of motorists. (Liebs:95)

Dwayne Jones in *A Field Guide to Gas Stations in Texas* provides a clear look at the development of the gas station and its evolution:

A station is referred to by various popular names including *filling* station (approximately 1910-1920), *gasoline* or *gas* stations (1920 – 1940), or *service* station (meaning a place where a variety of automobile services are provided, 1920 to post World War II). The evolution of the term reflects the gradual expansion of commercial enterprise, from the curbside distribution of fuel in a crude and rudimentary process along every town's main street, to a sophisticated corporate distribution program that offered a branded product along an interstate highway system. The development of the gas station also evolved from a simple and common building form to a complex building form during the 20th century, attracting the attention of major industrial designers and architects. Despite the commonality of the property type, specific forms and styles arose during progressive time periods, in different areas of the country, and evolved through the country. (Jones: 1)

The gas stations within the Historic Miracle Mile District were all developed to attract customers with a variety of popular styles -- from Spanish Revival, including Schafer-Norton Service Station (MM092), (MM038), and (MM085); to the Art Deco Streamline exemplified in the 1937 G. D. F. Frazier Service Station (MM086) designed with two pumps; to the post-World War II Modern style stations on Oracle Road, such as the D E Hicks service station (MM077).

The earliest gas station in the Historic Miracle Mile District is the 1926 station at 625 North Stone Avenue (MM085). Like hundreds of gas stations that appeared between 1920 and 1930, its architecture focused on an independent identity. This station, built without a canopy, expressing the form of an office with service bay (now infilled), is indicative of the era. Between 1930 and 1940 streamlined stations appeared, as described by Jones:

As much of the country recognized the role of machines and drive-in convenience in everyday life, new and sophisticated gas stations appeared across the county. A genre of

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industrial designers emerged to influence the design of the automobile and contributed to the now pervasive gas station.[...] Independent station owners often projected their own individuality in materials, design, and or location. “Owners built or modified their buildings to be in the shape of eye-catching roadside structures [...] The independent gas station owners sometimes gained a market edge in a highly competitive business environment with their novelty buildings.” (Jones:47)

Between 1940 and 1950, many gasoline companies emphasized standardization of building design or form with repetitive corporate logos, colors, and services. Aluminum and glass for storefronts became common building materials for gas stations.” (Jones: 47)

The 1950 Gulf Station at 2580 North Oracle Road (MM070) is emblematic of this move toward standardization.

The final gas station design phase, 1950 – 1970, embraced the modern era with flat roofs, increased use of glass, and steel frame structures. By this time, the pump-covering canopy had become ubiquitous. By 1960 the first ranch style station had been introduced in California. Service stations at the northern end of the Historic Miracle Mile District, built during this period, reflect this more modern design approach with steel systems and pre-fabricated components.

Restaurants

During the period of significance within the Miracle Mile Historic District, there were a number of independent restaurants ranging from food stands to steakhouses to drive-ins to diners. Today, ten original restaurant buildings survive, although only a few function as modern eateries. Again Liebs:

Of all the structures, signs, and symbols that stream before the automobile windshield in the late-twentieth-century America, none appears to have a more deeply rooted track to the inner psyche than the familiar shapes, colors and graphics of roadside restaurants. Orange roofs, golden arches, and plastic visages of a colonel in his white summer suit all trigger an instant mental review of familiar menus – from fried clams and hamburgers to cardboard-box chicken – while the sleek lines of streamlined diners spark an image of bacon, eggs, and home fries. (Liebs:193)

Regional Mexican restaurants, steakhouses, and a Polynesian-themed bar lined Miracle Mile Simultaneous with this development were the roadside food stands. The food stands, modest structures with few, if any, seats, were the predecessors of the fast food chain. The best surviving example of this building type in the Historic Miracle Mile District is the 1928 M. L. Stephenson Restaurant located at 503 North Stone Avenue (MM 079). The small building has a hipped roof, small entry door, and small windows.

The drive-in restaurant was prevalent during the period of significance and existed in the Miracle Mile Historic District. Only one drive-in building survives today: Duke's Drive Inn & Beau Brummel Club located on 1148 North Main (MM022).

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Diners also thrived in the Miracle Mile Historic District and some of the buildings that housed these restaurants are still extant. The 1958 Uncle John's Pancake House at 210 West Drachman Street (MM007) is an example of this restaurant type.

Trucking Warehouses

Trucking companies needed warehouses to move goods in and out of Tucson, and these buildings needed to be in close proximity to the highway. Oracle Road turned into Main Avenue at Drachman Street and warehouses were constructed on both sides of the road. The large buildings are constructed from brick or block with large rolling doors designed for easy truck access. The warehouses, which are part of the Historic Miracle Mile District, were an important resource in the transfer of goods by highway. The 1946 Western Truck Lines (MM024) and Industrial Transportation (MM025) are examples of this property type.

Auto Showrooms

The auto showroom was another significant property type in the Miracle Mile Historic District. The showrooms were large in scale and represented a large investment compared to smaller property types along the road.

Auto Showrooms have played an essential role in the commercial ecology of the roadside. Nearly every car that has ever cruised the nation's highways made its debut as a gleaming newborn industrial artifact at an auto showroom. In addition to being the maternity wards of the motor age, showrooms have also served the roles of wedding chapel where driver and the new car are first united; hospital, where ailing cars receive treatment; and funeral parlor, where owners and their elderly vehicles part company at trade-in-time. (Liebs:81)

The Miracle Mile Historic District is home to two auto showrooms from the period of significance: the 1940 Beaudry Motor Company Showroom (MM093), and the 1954 Quebedeaux Pontiac Auto Dealership (MM045). The early automobile showrooms used traditional storefronts and posh hotel lobbies to exhibit the new vehicles, and as popularity soared in the 1920s, dealers began constructing buildings designed to highlight their automobiles. In Tucson, these early showrooms are located a few blocks from the Historic Miracle Mile District on North 6th Avenue and are constructed in the early twentieth-century Revival styles. As the car designs advanced, showroom architecture responded. The Beaudry Showroom embraced a simple horizontal streamline design with plate glass. In 1955, nearly 8 million cars were shipped from the nation's factories. Post-World War II showrooms transformed the roadside with plate glass and architectural exuberance. The Quebedeaux Pontiac Auto Dealership building at the corner of Drachman Street and Oracle Road is an example of this change.

Entertainment Properties

As part of the glittering entry way into Tucson, entrepreneurs invested in entertainment in the form of drive-in theaters, bowling alleys, and miniature golf courses. The only drive-in movie theater in the Miracle Mile Historic District was converted to an apartment complex in the 1980s. Two extant bowling alley buildings are located in the Miracle Mile Historic District. Speedway

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Bowling Lanes built in 1941 at 1240 North Stone Avenue (MM0100) is now a boxing gym; the 1950 Golden Pin Lanes at 922 West Miracle Mile (MM039) still functions as a bowling alley. Popularity in bowling surged in the early 1940s and throughout the post-World War II era.

Neon Signage

A significant feature of the Historic Miracle Mile District is the abundance of original mid-twentieth century neon advertising signage designed and constructed for the original businesses lining the corridor. The art of neon signage was developed before the development of the Miracle Mile Historic District, as a result, neon was prolifically used even in the earliest businesses along the corridor.

The 22 extant neon monument signs contribute to the Miracle Mile Historic District's visual fabric. All these signs are located along the original highway alignments of U.S. Route 80 and U.S. Route 89, or within one block of these corridors. Generally these signs retain an association with the businesses they front and contribute to the historic quality of the individual property. In some cases, however, the building originally associated with the sign is gone or has been significantly modified, yet the sign remains as an artifact of the area's glittering past. These colorful luminescent structures are important character-defining features of the Miracle Mile Historic District; they activate the night environment, create visual continuity, exemplify the art of neon tube sculpture, and provide a tangible link to the past. The condition of these signs varies from excellent to poor, from full functioning as originally intended to painted-over sheet metal shells. In some cases, functional signs have been redesigned as owners, uses, and businesses have changed, leaving intact only the primary form and structure.

Monument signs of glass tubes filled with electrically excited neon gas, although ubiquitous icons in the American commercial landscape, were invented in Europe, a product of the electrical revolution of the late 1800s. Scientists and visionaries including Francis Hawksbee, Johann Winkler, Heinrich Geissler, and Nikola Tesla invented new technologies that allowed the bombardment of gases with high-voltage alternating current to make them glow, a process immediately joined to glassblowing. Mixtures of gasses produced a wide spectrum of available colors. Rudi Stern, in his book *Let There Be Neon*, credits the electrical infrastructure developed by Thomas Edison with making the neon revolution possible.

The outdoor electric spectacular, which would transform city centers all over the world into nighttime wonderlands of kinetic excitement, was born in the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. Thomas Alva Edison had made this possible through his invention in 1879 of the first commercially practical incandescent lamp. By the early 1880s he had developed all of the equipment and techniques for a complete electrical distribution system leading to the first electric-light power plant in the world, on Pearl Street in New York City. By 1900, electricity was flowing into nearly 1,500 incandescent lamps arrayed on the narrow front of the Flatiron Building to form America's first electrically lighted outdoor advertising sign. (Stern 1979:16)

As electricity was harnessed and sold as a commercial commodity, French entrepreneur George Claude patented and marketed the neon sign on a mass scale, holding a virtual monopoly on the

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industrial development and manufacturing of such signs. Claude exhibited the first neon sign at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1910. Two years later, the first neon sign was installed in Paris. In 1923, the first American electric advertising sign shone over Earl Anthony's Packard dealership in Los Angeles, California, stopping traffic and ushering in the American Neon Age.

In 1924, Claude's neon sign franchise opened its first U.S. office in New York City, followed by Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco.

Neon, which was to play a very important part in urban nocturnal spectacles, was introduced to the United States in 1923. By virtue of its flexible luminosity, neon could produce effects beyond the capacity of earlier light sources. It could create startling silhouettes, whether of figures or letters, in a range of color combinations that seemed infinite. In an advertising brochure of Claude Neon, the French firm of George Claude that held a virtual monopoly on neon tube manufacture in its early years, neon tubes were described as "the latest and most artistic forms of electric advertising and illumination. The light given is continuous, very distinctive, and peculiarly attractive. It has been described as a 'living flame.'" A European hybrid of art and technology, neon's elegance and refinement came from France, then the undisputed international arbiter of taste. However, neon soon became symbolic of American energy and inventiveness, its Continental roots giving rise to a spectacular flowering of American showmanship in the late 1920s and early 1930s. (Stern 1979:16)

The use of neon signs exploded throughout the mid-twentieth century. Tucson's commercial strips, downtown, and highways were all lined with large neon monument signs. The popularity of neon signs generated the need for local shops to manufacture and repair the neon tubes, which were fragile and, therefore, not easy to ship.

From the beginning there were problems with infringements. As the popularity of neon spread, small one-man shops proliferated. Owing to the tubes' fragility they did not ship well, so even small towns began to have a need for neon shops. (Stern 1979:16)

In 1929 the first Tucson sign company explicitly listed in the Tucson City Directory for the production of electric signs was the National Sheet Metal Mfg. Co. located at 353 Toole Avenue. In 1930, under the city directory heading "Neon Sign," the only company listed was the Arizona Sheet Metal Co.

Between 1939 and 1940, six Tucson companies created neon-electric signs. Many other sign production companies were active during this two-year period but there is no evidence of their involvement in neon.

By the end of the 1930s,

[...] motorists drove faster cars, and motels used everything at their disposal to stop them. Neon signs became much more specialized and most motel operations featured distinct names [...] Building became part of the sign itself [...] The motel sign was recognized as

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a regional interpretation of the vacation fantasies expected by the motorist. (Jakle 1996:155)

By 1950, over 17 neon sign production companies were active in Tucson. Over the next decade, colored plastic and fluorescent displays begin replacing neon, and the neon industry as a whole began to fade away. Today, neon sculpture (as well as repair and refurbishment) is still practiced by sign makers and artists as an obscure technological art. Some of these companies are still active in Tucson.

Little is known about the individual craftsman and artists who produced these glowing nighttime highway monuments. Few records from that period have surfaced; the primary source material is limited to visual documentation in old postcards and photographs from this era. The work of these craftsmen was fundamental in shaping the visual character of Tucson's highways. Their design cues came from architecture, "Western" sensibilities, and nostalgic marketing trends.

Isadore Posner is one of Tucson's known neon artists, active from 1934 onwards. Isadore was the son of early Tucson sign maker Philip Posner, who established Tucson's first sign painting store in 1913. The Russian-Jewish Philip Posner immigrated to New York in 1899, moving to Los Angeles three years later. With his wife and seven children, he moved to Tucson in 1913 (*Arizona Daily Star* 1962:4). Isadore Posner created a new company to manufacture neon signs for Tucson businesses in 1934.

Like the service station and motel industry, the shape and character of neon signs changed to reflect new American tastes and sensibility. During the 1950s, the American preoccupation with space influenced sign design. The change of the Linda Vista Motel sign on Miracle Mile demonstrates this shift from Western/ Frontier Revival to Neon Moderne.

Highway Improvements and New Development

In 1937, J. W. Angle, vice chairman of the State Highway Commission, in conjunction with the City of Tucson Mayor and Council, the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the Chamber of Commerce, the Realty Board, the Sunshine Club, other members of the Highway Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Public Roads, successfully initiated the \$200,000 "Miracle Mile" construction project. The substantial highway improvements transformed the Miracle Mile Historic District. *Arizona Highways* magazine coined the name "Miracle Mile: Safety-Plus Thoroughfare" for these new roadway improvements.

Arizona is to have a "Miracle Mile" – an almost perfect piece of roadway that will be fool proof! It will be the only safety-plus thoroughfare in the West, and as such will put the state in the spotlight of national highways.

Beginning at the city limits of Tucson, the road will extend for 1.75 miles toward the Florence-Casa Grande Junction on U.S. Highway 80 and 89. It is to be an ultra-modern construction unit with 22-foot roadway divided by a center separation strip 38 ft. wide. This center parkway, it is believed, will eliminate whatever hazards have existed in night

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driving, and with a bordering five inch curb will allow emergency access to the center zone. (*Arizona Highways* 1937:20)

In addition to the center median, two streamlined traffic circles were constructed at each end of Oracle Road by Tanner Construction Company. In 2007, the southern circle at the Oracle Road and Drachman Street intersection was eliminated and replaced with a generic “T” intersection controlled by a traffic light. The remaining northern circle at the intersection of Oracle Road and Miracle Mile is an important streetscape design.

Along the new roadway,

[t]he imagery that enticed travelers and provided an informal marketing strategy for most of these road-side businesses was a conscious response to regional preferences. [...] In the southwest, the image was that of the “Wild West”. The real “Wild West” was not a canned concept, but a drive to exploit the economic possibilities of a vast frontier [...] The idea of the West became pre-eminent when the real West had exhausted its supply of cowboys, Native Americans, gunfighters and wagon trails. By the early 1900s, a Wild West conjured by pulp writers and tourist-brochure descriptions had become a fictional truth. When applied to signs, drive-in theaters, gas stations and other commercial enterprises, the new West was realized. Part fact. Part fiction. In creating this illusion, a fundamental ploy of advertising, travelers were served a liberal dose of mythology. Western imagery in the American Southwest was instrumental in convincing travelers to choose one business over another. (Heimann 1997:3)

The highway business sector continued to grow. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) Arizona State Guide published in 1940 reported that Tucson had “25 hotels and 45 tourist courts on principal highways,” although 50 auto courts were listed that year in the City Directory. During the same year, “out of state cars traveled 271,140,615 miles over the state highway system, setting a new record.” (Wood 1941:30-31)

They [the auto courts] represent the golden age of Tucson [...] Their signs represent a new age of exuberance. They were neon icons of the confidence of the automobile era. [...] Their building styles reflect the mania for all things Southwestern, design motifs that coalesced into what (Brooks) Jeffery calls “funky roadside vernacular.” After a long day of driving, you pass innumerable glowing neon sculptures of cacti and Hispanic cultural images or stereotypes, each inviting you to stay in a cowboy-style lodge with heavy wood beams on the main house, or a Pueblo Deco design with curves and angles on a roofline, evoking Native American traditions, or most popular of all, modest Mission-style casitas, complete with red-tile roofs, adobe bricks, and porches. (Jeffery qt. in Regan 2004:79-81)

Following the substantial improvements to the roadway, the Miracle Mile Historic District experienced a building boom. In 1940, a number of motor courts/motels were constructed, including: De Anza Motel (MM065), Naomi Court (MM071), and the Oracle Court (MM073), renamed Tiki Motel in the 1960s-1970s. Before the onset of World War II, another 15 motor

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courts opened along Miracle Mile. Restaurants and entertainment proliferated along the highway alignment accommodating tourists and locals.

During this period, the design of service stations within the Miracle Mile Historic District evolved from simple buildings to more ornamental designs embracing more regionally popular revival styles and a modern Art Deco. Although the gas stations throughout the Miracle Mile Historic District generally represent independent designs, there are also design features influenced by the national marketing trends and corporate identity. In addition to auto related services, businesses developed along the roadside in response to the burgeoning American car culture, serving both locals and visitors. Within the Miracle Mile Historic District, drive-in restaurants, bowling alleys, and drive-in theaters were all part of the streetscape. In addition to the more exuberant building types, trucking warehouses were developed on Main Avenue between Drachman Street and Speedway Boulevard.

Highway Following World War II

The tourist industry along the highway corridor continued as a bellwether of the economic climate of the city, and the motor courts and their development served as an illustration of the evolving commercial arterial.

During World War II, the demand for motel rooms, restaurants, and entertainment in Tucson increased as military personnel flooded the city in large numbers. New motels and restaurants were built along the Benson Highway section of U.S. Route 80 to serve travelers, including troops at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

In southern Arizona, motor courts, restaurants, and entertainment venues continued to be built during and after the war. The state's growing tourist business and the influx of new residents in the late 1940s meant that rooms and services were in high demand. *Arizona Highways* reported in 1948 that there "are literally hundreds of auto courts doing rushing business in Phoenix and Tucson, and in them thousands of winter visitors have a pleasant sojourn in the sun." (1948:17)

Their designs, traceable stylistically decade by decade, began with type and figurative imagery, evolving into post-war boomerangs and palette shapes. In between were all the familiar attention-getting devices for travelers passing by at 35 mph. Arrows, stars, zigzags. Type styles were hodgepodge. San serif and sexy script. Novelty fonts evoking old wooden hand-set type or vaguely "Indian" lettering, a choppy Pueblo style suggesting Native American handiwork (Heimann 1997:4).

By the end of the war, all of the courts in Tucson would again compete for tourist business, and by the late 1950s they faced the prospect of Interstate 10 replacing Highway 80 as the major route through town. (Devine 1997:167).

Tucson was rapidly expanding, and by 1948, there were 121 motor courts along its highways, with dozens of guest ranches providing the "Western Experience" to the tourist market. Returning from World War II, G.I.s who had been stationed in the area flocked to Arizona's warm climate, and the Miracle Mile Historic District continued to develop. The streetscape was

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improved with the addition of two-tone overhead streetlights, broad sidewalks, crosswalks, and trees.

In 1944, city planners began to develop an alternative road alignment along the eastern bank of the Santa Cruz River to accommodate trucking traffic. A 1948 city bond election funded the bypass route. The riverbank boulevard was designed with space for four lanes and a median. The first section of this controlled access highway opened in 1954 with interchanges at Miracle Mile, Congress Street and South 6th Avenue, but had no overpasses or interchanges at Grant Road, Speedway Boulevard or St. Mary's Road. (Tucson Daily Citizen 1954:1) This limited access road would develop into a segment of Interstate Highway.

During the 1950s, larger and more modern motels were constructed along Stone Avenue and Drachman Street. The Flamingo, Tucson Inn, Tidelands, Travel Lodge, and Imperial 400 added hundreds of rooms to accommodate highway travelers. These large two- or three-story motels were promoted with cutting edge amenities including heated swimming pools, TV, and in-house restaurants. Although this new construction had begun, the relevance of the Miracle Mile corridor was beginning to dwindle.

Coast-to-coast surface transportation over two-lane blacktop was considered insufficient for moving military equipment and troops if needed. In 1956, the Interstate Highway System was authorized under the Federal-Aid Highway Act. Championed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as integral to of the country's national defense, construction began immediately. The Tucson segment of Interstate 10 was fully completed in 1961, bypassing the city core and significantly curtailing in-town through-traffic. The diversion of traffic resulted in the further decline of the Miracle Mile corridor. Once completed, the new freeway made the old U.S. Highways and Arizona State Highways for long-haul travelers obsolete. The classic era of American automobile culture rapidly began to fade. Economically devastated, the old highway corridors devolved into the hidden poverty and alienation of post-World War II America.

The concept of an Interstate bypass was initially rejected by the community and the local businesses lining U.S. Routes 80 and Arizona Route 84.

[The Interstate] was opposed, when it first was proposed by numerous responsible people. When a big oil tanker was hit by a railroad train at one of Tucson's crossings, the fire that resulted awakened many Tucsonans to the danger of these and other big trucks passing though the center of the city. (*Arizona Daily Star* 1959:1)

For almost a decade before the Interstate, highway traffic had been fodder for community debate. The growth of Tucson and the astounding increase in automobile traffic though the city core gave an added impetus to the proposal to build a freeway. Transcontinental traffic became so heavy that it seriously interfered with those who wanted to shop downtown. (Dougherty 1947)

Interstate 10 in Arizona was laid out by the Arizona Highway Department in 1956-58 roughly paralleling several historic routes across the state. Particularly east of Eloy, it follows the Butterfield Stage and Pony Express routes, and loops south to avoid the

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north-south Basin and Range mountains prevalent in the state. In fact, the route from its junction with Interstate 8 east to New Mexico is almost exactly the same route used by the old horse-drawn stagecoaches, which had to go from waterhole to waterhole and avoid the hostile Apache Indians. This is why I-10 is more of a north-south route between Phoenix and Tucson than east-west. The Southern Pacific Sunset Route line had to take the route of least hills, and in the 1920s highways were laid down next to the trains across southern Arizona. (Interstate 10 in Arizona 2012)

The road from Coolidge to Tucson was originally Arizona Routes 84 and 93, and when it was rebuilt as a freeway in 1961-62, it was co-signed as Interstate 10 and Routes 84 and 93, until, in 1966, Route 84 was truncated at Picacho. This section of interstate was completed in 1961, and forced the demolition of the town center at Marana, which has never really recovered. The freeway through Tucson (being rebuilt in 2008) was originally signed as State Route 84 from Miracle Mile to Sixth Avenue. (Interstate 10 in Arizona 2012)

Initially, Interstate 10 offered only limited exits, allowing Miracle Mile, Oracle Road, Drachman Street, and Stone Avenue to remain the northern gateway of Tucson through the 1960s. Covered in billboards, festooned with aging neon signs, the corridor maintained its relevancy and large-scale investment flowed. In 1961, Del Webb's 80,000 sq. ft. Hi-way House Motor Hotel was constructed north of Drachman Street on Oracle Road.

In 1963, the pinnacle of the Miracle Mile Historic District's commercial investment was reached with the construction of the 17-story Tucson House. The location of this modern building, designed by Nicholas Sakellar, FAIA, was an architectural continuum of the evolution of the building typology along the corridor – from motor courts to motels to high-rise. Throughout the period of significance, the corridor served as the economic gateway to the city, and the Tucson House became a symbol of twentieth-century investment. The array of amenities along the highway corridor not only continued to attract motorists to the area, but also residents. This luxury apartment building, which had 409 residential units, was featured in *Time Magazine* and *TV Guide*. Units had views to either the north or south and entire exterior living room walls opened to balconies with sliding doors. The promotional brochure described the high-rise as "a city within a city." Amenities included limousine service, game, recreation, and arts and crafts rooms; a beauty shop; a barber shop; a laundromat; an Olympic sized swimming pool; a sauna; an ornate lobby; three elevators, extensive security measures; and a 17th- floor penthouse indoor-outdoor solarium. U.S. Congressman Morris K. Udall was a resident for 2 years during the 1960s. (Rawlinson:1986)

The Tucson House marked the corridor's last significant investment; small-scale investment had all but stopped. Cars were traveling faster and further than ever before. Interstate exits were added at Speedway Boulevard, Grant Road, and Saint Mary's Road; these made it possible to circumvent the Miracle Mile strip, and new hotel and restaurant construction shifted closer to the edge of the Interstate. Airline travel, which became less expensive and more convenient, was an increasingly frequent alternative to driving. According to oral histories with early owners of

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motels, the oil crisis of 1973 was the final blow, effectively ending leisure travel. The Miracle Mile Historic District never recovered.

Miracle Mile clung to its identity as Tucson's northern gateway and glowing neon entrance to the city, despite the 1970s-1980s demolition of businesses and motels, including the drive-in theaters, Miracle Mile Drug, Marilyn Motel, Tucson Biltmore, All-States, El Ray, and M motels. Others, including the Thunderbird and the El Sol, were modified beyond recognition, but the majority of buildings retained their integrity in part because no investment for upgrades was being made within the corridor.

The deterioration of the highway was explored in two major movie studio productions, each of which won an Academy Award. Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More* (1974) was filmed on Tucson's Miracle Mile, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) was centered on a bypassed highway somewhere south of Phoenix. These stories both address the depressing erosion and economic impact of the freeway on "mom-and-pop" highway commerce. A smaller film, *Two Lane Blacktop* (1971), was an existential look at the U.S. Highway transcontinental system made obsolete by the Interstate Highway.

In the mid-1970s, the Tucson House occupancy declined as Miracle Mile deteriorated, and the federally insured mortgage was foreclosed. The property was auctioned in October 1976 to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which provided a grant to the City of Tucson to purchase it. By August 1986 a \$4 million dollar renovation was completed, creating 100 subsidized apartments. (Rawlinson 1986).

The business, service station, and motels that were once the commercial backbone of the area, became overrun with prostitution, crime, and drugs. Some motels, such as the De Anza (MM065) at 2425 North Oracle Road, capitalized on this shift, choosing new names such as the "No-Tel Motel." Others simply give up any last pretense of auto court tourist culture and rented rooms by the hour. By the early 1980s, Miracle Mile had become famous as a decrepit locale for scandals, and sank into economic quicksand. Despite these failures, the patronage of less-affluent snowbirds, ongoing miscellaneous service-oriented businesses, and adult entertainment, as well as prostitution and other criminal activity, afforded a marginal survival for some commercial entities in the Miracle Mile Historic District.

On 2 February 1987, attempting to distance the community from the now infamous roadway associated with blight and crime, the Tucson Mayor and Council voted 4-2 to rename the "North Miracle Mile Strip" as "North Oracle Road" – yet another attempt to whitewash the area's image (Blondin 1987:6).

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Images of historic postcards were graciously provided by the Tucson Postcard Club and obtained with the help of Sean Madrid. Dirk Arnold generously lent photographs from the 1970s, and Steve Mathie lent historic family photographs of Oracle Road taken during the 1950s. Also enormously helpful were the memories of the Mehl family, early owners of the La Siesta Motel.

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Miracle Mile Historic District

Name of Property

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Miracle Mile Historic District
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Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 161 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>500954</u> | Northing: <u>3569379</u> |
| 2. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>502066</u> | Northing: <u>3569366</u> |
| 3. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>502089</u> | Northing: <u>3566986</u> |
| 4. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>502085</u> | Northing: <u>3566593</u> |
| 5. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>502650</u> | Northing: <u>3566978</u> |
| 6. Zone: <u>12</u> | Easting: <u>502665</u> | Northing: <u>3565543</u> |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Overall Boundary – The northern edge is one block north of Miracle Mile (excluding the cemetery); the southern edge is at the southern end of the Stone Avenue Underpass; the eastern edge is one block east of Stone Avenue with a slight indentation along the boundaries of West University Historic District to prevent overlapping districts; and the western edge is between Fairview Avenue and Flowing Wells Road.

- *Group 1 Boundary* – The northern edge is one block north of Miracle Mile (excluding the cemetery); the southern edge runs between Miracle Mile and Laguna Street, with the exception of the southeastern most edge, which extends a bit beyond Laguna Street; the eastern most edge extends beyond Oracle Road to Balboa Avenue; and the western edge is between Fairview Avenue and Flowing Wells Road.
- *Group 2 Boundary* – The northern edge is approximately half way between Glenn Street and Kelso Street; the southern edge is approximately half way between Alturas Street and Grant Road; the eastern edge is generally adjacent to Oracle Road with several protrusions between Oracle Road and Balboa Avenue; and the western edge is one block east of Oracle Road.
- *Group 3 Boundary* – The northern edge is along Sahuaro Street; the southern edge is at Speedway Boulevard; the eastern edge runs generally between Oracle Road and 11th Avenue from the northern boundary to Drachman Street where it extends directly east to 7th Avenue, which is one block east of Stone Avenue; and the western edge runs between Oracle Road and 13th Avenue with one protrusion east of 13th Avenue and one just east of 14th Avenue.
- *Group 4 Boundary* – The northern edge is approximately half way between Speedway Boulevard and University Boulevard; the southern edge is at the southern end of the Stone Avenue Underpass; the eastern edge is one block east of Stone Avenue with a slight indentation along the boundaries of West University Historic District to prevent overlapping districts; and the western edge runs between Stone Avenue and 9th Avenue.

See attached Boundary Maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Miracle Mile Historic District are discontinuous and represent four groups of clustered buildings possessing sufficient historical association and integrity to be considered contributing elements. These groups are connected by the alignment of U.S. Routes 80 and 89 and Arizona Route 84. The boundaries include properties adjacent to the highway alignment and auto-related resources within one block of the arterial road.” The Historic Miracle Mile District includes contributing and non-contributing buildings, structures, and objects. See attached maps.

Miracle Mile Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Demion Clinco
organization: Frontier Consulting Group, LLC
street & number: 230 East 23rd Street
city or town: Tucson state: Arizona zip code: 85713
e-mail: demonc@yahoo.com
telephone: (520) 247-8969
date: August 2009

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Historic Miracle Mile District

City or Vicinity: Tucson

County: Pima State: Arizona

Photographer: Demion Clinco

Date Photographed: June 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 19

Miracle Mile Historic District

Name of Property

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0001

Drachman Street, camera looking southeast with Frontier Motel in the foreground.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0002

Miracle Mile, camera looking southeast with Terrace Motel in the foreground.

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AZ_PimaCounty_Miracle Mile Historic District _0003

Main Avenue, camera looing south.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0004

Drachman Street, camera looking east.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0005

Stone Avenue, camera looking southeast with Flamingo Hotel in foreground.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0006

Stone Avenue, camera looking northeast.

7 of 19

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0007

Stone Avenue, camera looking northeast.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0008

Oracle Road, camera looing northeast, La Siesta Motel.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0009

Oracle Road, camera looking northeast, Quail Inn.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0010

Stone Avenue, camera looking southeast, Stone Avenue Underpass.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0011

Stone Avenue, camera looking east, Art Deco service station.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0012

Drachman Street, camera looking northeast, exuberant modern form.

Miracle Mile Historic District
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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0013

Drachman Street, camera looking northwest, exuberant modern form.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0014

Drachman Street, camera looking southeast, Spanish Revival motel.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0015

Main Avenue, camera looking southeast, rounded café façade.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0016

Miracle Mile, camera looking southeast, Ghost Ranch Lodge, sign and detail.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0017

Miracle Mile, camera looking southeast, Riviera Motor Lodge detail.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0018

Oracle Road, camera looking east, Tucson House building west façade.

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_0019

Oracle Road, camera looking northeast, Tucson House building south façade.

Figures

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0001

Old Spanish Trail, Locke's, 1916.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0002

Oracle Road, camera looking north, c. 1937.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0003

Oracle Road and Drachman Street, camera looking north, c. 1937.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0004

Miracle Mile, camera looking east, c. 1937.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0005

Tucson Motel Directory, c. 1950.

Miracle Mile Historic District

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AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0006
Aerial View, camera looking south, Drachman Street, c. 1940.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0007
Aerial View, camera looking west, Drachman Street in middle, c. 1940.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0008
Aerial View, camera looking south, Oracle Road and Miracle Mile, c. 1940.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0009
Oracle Road, camera looking south, street view, c. 1950.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0010
Oracle Road, camera looking north, sign view, c. 1950.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0011
Oracle Road, camera looking north, street view, c. 1950.

AZ_PimaCounty_MiracleMileHistoricDistirct_Figure_0012
Drachman Street, camera looking southeast, Tucson Inn, c. 1960.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.